

# **WOMAN'S REBELLION IN SIDNEY SHELDON'S NOVEL**

***IF TOMORROW COMES (1985):***

**A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**



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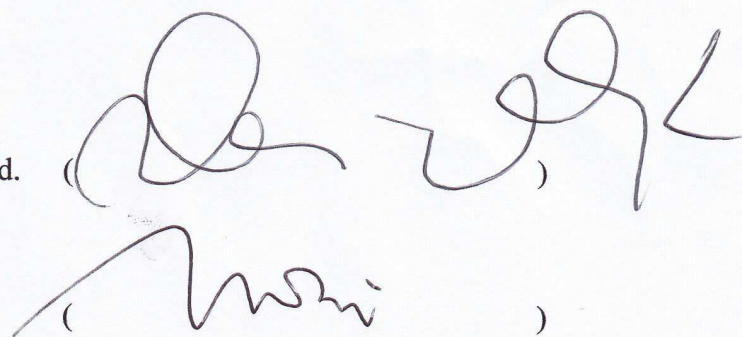
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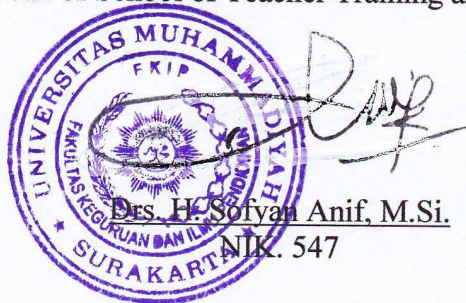
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The Dean of School of Teacher Training and Education



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# WOMAN REBELLION IN SIDNEY SHELDON'S NOVEL

*IF TOMORROW COMES (1985):*

**A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

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## ABSTRACT

*The study is to reveal how women's rebellion is reflected in If Tomorrow Comes by Sidney Sheldon published in 1985. The objective of the study is to analyze the novel based on structural elements and to analyze women's rebellion based on feminist perspective.*

*The object of the study is a novel If Tomorrow Comes by Sidney Sheldon. The researcher employs the descriptive qualitative research as a type of the research. The data sources are divided into two, namely primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source and the object of study is the novel itself, and the secondary data source is any literature information related to this study. The methods of collecting data are searching through the internet, library reviewing and analyzing based on feminist perspective.*

*Based on the analysis, the researcher draws two conclusions: first, based on the structural analysis of the novel, it has an important role to build up the story so each element cannot be separated from the other. Second, based on the feminist perspective, Sidney Sheldon's novel shows that woman's rebellion gets a lot of injustice treatment and being underestimated by men. That is why she becomes suffered and she revenges, rebels her lives. Sheldon also criticizes the woman's struggle to get the same opportunity using their power. In this novel Sidney Sheldon apparently shows that woman can undergo the oppression condition in her life.*

**Keywords:** *Woman Rebellion, If Tomorrow Comes, Feminist Perspective.*

## I. Introduction

**Background of the Study:** Rebellion is an act of rebelling. It derives from the word rebel, which means person who fights against the government or opposes authority (Hornby, 1985:344). Life is an amazing journey. Everyone has their own stories. They could be sad or happy. People always make plan to arrange them successfully, but deep down beyond the expectation, God disposes it. Every second our life can change dramatically. Every individual has the way to resist their fate. Basically, based on their gender, whether it is male or female. Male has superior position than female. It implies stronger condition than female, either in himself personally or socially. Otherwise, female is subordinate than male. She can not be stronger than him.

Definitely, they have different political, economic, and social rights and opportunities. Its concepts overlap with those of women's rights. For instance the social construction of sex and gender in reproductive rights, the rights of protection in domestic violence, sexual harrasment, and sexual assault and also the rights in the workplace, includes equal pay, opportunities for careers and to start businesses. Women have the same rights to defeat social structure in our society and inequality gender problem, one of them was legitimated by the religion belief that gender was biased. Sometimes, women face a problem that was related with social, economic, political commitment to eradicating race, class and sexual domination and reorganization society so that individual self-development takes precedence over imperialism, economic expansion and material desires" (Hook in Mandell, 1995:124).

Actually, The implementation of the phenomenon is the women react with it, they rebel with their own way as the autonomous being, that is free from any

kinds of boundaries in life. We call it as Feminist. Feminist as a word gained widespread usage in the Western world in the 1890s. It emerged at this time as a way to “identify individuals who supported not merely an increased public role for women but also women's right to define themselves as autonomous beings” (Mandell, 1995:4). According Mandel there is four basic tenets of feminist perspective: *woman's position, women's right, women's role, women participation.*

*If Tomorrow Comes* is a novel of one famous American Author, Sidney Sheldon which is published in 1985 by Warner Book and it, has 408 pages. It is a crime fiction novel. Sheldon's describes in *If Tomorrow Comes*, that Tracy Whitney, the protagonist of the story, is a young, beautiful, and intelligent woman working as a computer operator for a bank in Philadelphia. The story begins with a phone conversation between Tracy and her mother Doris Whitney, who lives in New Orleans and takes care of the business set up by her deceased husband. Tracey tells her mother about her planned marriage with a businessman, Charles Stanhope III. Doris commits suicide after the conversation and Tracy is notified about it by a Lieutenant of the New Orleans police department. Upon arriving at New Orleans, Tracey becomes aware of the circumstances that led to her mother's suicide. She learns that Joe Romano, the main assistant of New Orleans' mafia leader Anthony Orsatti, had framed her mother into a legal case relating to fraud, Doris didn't have the money to fight the case and decided to commit suicide.

Tracey is filled with hatred for Romano, and naively decides to bring her mother's name in the clear by making Romano confess his misdeed. She purchases a gun, which she only intends to use to threaten Romano, and reaches Romano's house. Romano lets her in and offers her a drink, while she asks him to write out a confession letter. Romano refuses, snatches the gun and tries to rape Tracey. She

grabs the gun during the struggle and accidentally fires a shot at Romano. She is horrified, as she never intended to kill Romano. She calls for medical aid and then flees to the airport where she is arrested by two policemen.

She learns that Romano was alive, only wounded by the shot. The plaintiff accuses her of attempted murder and stealing a costly painting from Romano's house. She is assigned an attorney named Perry Pope who, to her ignorance, works for the mafia. Pope convinces her to plead guilty in court before Judge Lawrence (who is also secretly a mafia man) and promises that she'll be given only a three month prison sentences. She follows his advice, and realizes in court that it was all a setup by Orsatti and Romano to destroy her, Lawrence sentences her 15 years of incarceration in Southern Louisiana Penitentiary for Women. Charles doesn't give her a chance to let her explain her version of the incident, and leaves her at her fate with his unborn child in her womb. Tracy enters a life of hardship, sexual harassment and violence at the penitentiary and vows revenge against all those who harmed her and her mother. The title of the novel itself is from a melodramatic quote in the novel, where Tracy vows to take her revenge tomorrow, if tomorrow comes. Eventually, she becomes the nanny for the prison warden's young daughter, a job that leads to her release from jail. After coming out, she cunningly sets up distrust among Romano, Perry Pope and Orsatti, and frames Judge Lawrence in Russia over spying charges, thus ruining Anthony Orsatti's empire.

Desperate, unable to find a job as an ex-convict, she turns to a well-known New York City jewelry store owner who helps her make some fast money in a jewel heist. Escaping with the goods, Tracy has an encounter with Jeff Stevens, a master con man. Stevens steals the jewels from Tracy, who realizes she's been had. She

then cons Jeff, taking back her prize. Not long after, Tracy travels to England and is introduced to Gunther Hartog, a world-class fence for valuable stolen property. Thus begins her life as one of the world's cleverest criminals, Tracy pursues some brilliant con schemes filled with humor and ingenuity all over Europe, such as stealing jewelry from an actress on the Orient Express, valuable painting from a museum, reselling a gem to a jeweler for much higher than its worth, etc. The Interpol issues alerts all over Europe in search of - as they perceive it, a gang of con-women. Only Daniel Cooper, a plain-looking sociopath and insurance investigator, seems capable of matching Tracy's brilliance; although he never manages to catch her red-handed. In the end, after having collected enough money to live a luxurious life, Tracy and Jeff plan to marry and live together in Brazil as law-abiding citizens.

The story has the main point. It reveals the way of a woman rebels her condition when a gang of men traps her and sends her into the jail. After, she gets out from the penitentiary, she has not already an ordinary citizen anymore. Several difficulties comes out. She is no longer have rights. And of course, an ex-convict would not be easy anymore to get in the society. Based on the above considerations, the researcher tries to break down the problem in Sidney Sheldon's *If Tomorrow Comes* using a feminist perspective.

**Problem Statement** is "How is woman's rebellion reflected in Sidney Sheldon's novel *If Tomorrow Comes*?"

**Limitation of the Study** is focused on woman's rebellion reflected in Sidney Sheldon's *If Tomorrow Comes* by using feminist perspective.

**Objective of the Study** is to give an additional contribution to the literary research, especially in the study of Sidney Sheldon's work and to give additional contribution on understanding *If Tomorrow Comes* from feminist perspective.

**Literature Review** as far as the researcher knows, in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta, there are some researchers who conduct the study on Sidney Sheldon's *If Tomorrow Comes*. Some researchers are: First, is Yulia Astini in 1995 with research entitled A Sociological Study of *If Tomorrow Comes*: A Genetic Structuralism Approach. Second, Henky Nugroho Tri Pebrunto in 2004 made a research Challenge and Response in Sidney Sheldon's *If Tomorrow Comes*: A Behavioristic Approach. The third is Agus Sriyanto is research in 2005 entitled Search for an Existence in Sidney Sheldon's *If Tomorrow Comes* : An Existentialist Approach. The fourth is Nita Purnawanti is research in 2004 entitled Greed and Conflict of Interests in Sidney Sheldon's *If Tomorrow Comes*: An Individual Psychological Approach. The fifth is Katon Wijayanti is research in 2009 entitled Anxiety of Tracy Whitney in Sidney Sheldon's *If Tomorrow Comes*: A Psychoanalytic Approach.

## **II. Research Method**

In this research, the researcher uses the descriptive qualitative method which employs the method of collecting, describing, classifying and analyzing the data which then drawing conclusion.

In doing this study, the writer uses two sources of data namely primary and secondary data sources. (1)Primary data source is the novel itself, Sidney Sheldon's novel *If Tomorrow Comes* (1985). It involves words, phrase and sentences. (2)Secondary data sources are taken from other sources such as biography of the author, website about the novel, several books of literature. The



method of collecting data is library research, in which the data from both primary and secondary sources are collected and recorded in a short of document used as evidence. The technique used to analyze the data in this movie is descriptive analysis. It concerns with the text and content analysis dealing with the feminist perspective of the novel, *If Tomorrow Comes*.

### **III. Feminism Theory**

#### **a. Notion of Feminism**

Feminism is a theory that concerns on the equality between men and women in politics, economics and socials, and other organizations that struggle for women right (Goofe in Sugihastuti, 2000:18). Feminist as a word gained widespread usage in the western world in the 1890s. It emerged at this time as a way to identify individuals who supported not merely an increased public role for women but also women's right to define themselves as autonomous being (Mandel, 1995:4). Feminist is a movement that struggle searching a freedom for women from oppression and injustice, they try to change their opportunity by struggle from suffering.

#### **b. Basic Concept of Feminist**

##### **1) Women's Position**

Women traditionally had been regarded as inferior to men. Their positions were under men. It is difficult for them to enter in public life, because it was dominated by men. Women can't be equal to the men, it happened because men consider that women are a weak person. Ferguson (in Gherardi, 1995:15) states that women are powerless because they are

feminine, because it is a way of dealing with the requirement of subordination.

## **2) Women's Role**

As we know that men always dominate in all aspect of life and in the domestic area. There is stereotype that women always associated with domestic role. Murphy (1995:49) states that a women's role in domestic area as wife and mother, give her life a moral dimension. Hence, women like this regarded a good wife that take care of child and serve their husband.

## **3) Women's Right**

Women's right is not only to make women become a free person, but also it is a process struggle of women to get equality. The struggle is to get opportunities on civil right. Nussbaum (1995:53) states that the demand for women's right is not simply a demand for female autonomy or independence but it is a matter of female survival".

## **4) Women's Participation**

Women's participation means that women having right to give aspiration and making decision in public life. But in our society, public life was dominated by men. Women were not allowed to participate in public life because women were placed in domestic area by men. Murphy (1995:2) state that "Women were generally excluded as for as possible from public life".

#### **IV. Theory of Rebellion**

Rebellion is an act of rebelling. It derives from the word rebel, who means person who fight the government or opposes authority (hornby, 1985:344). Rebellion is a reaction but not an action. The rebellion can occur when the cultural and the legitimate means are rejected; individuals create their own goals by protest or do rebellion. The act of rebellion is not just refusing; it demands the placement of morality even to life itself. It becomes a struggle to make a change. The rebel identifies with good or bad and suffering because a dominant force (Nevinson, 2004). People do some action in the form of rebellion, like performed silently, suicide, let go, refused to act, desire to kill, looking busy, revenges, demonstration and against the fear in.

#### **V. Research Finding**

##### **a. Women's Position**

Women traditionally had been regarded as inferior to men. Their positions were under men. This novel shows that Tracy attempts to struggle her mother's right, to get a justice in the law.

Your old lady held out on me ... she didn't tell me she had a horny-looking daughter ... you have guts, baby. I like that it turns me on ... you came here for a little excitement, huh? Well, Joe's going to give it to you. Romano ripped her blouse away. "Hey! Look at those tits." he whispered. He began pinching her nipples. "fight me, baby," he whispered. "I love it!"... I'll bet you've never been fucked by a real man (Sheldon, 1985: 30).

Tracy Whitney had underestimated and gets a sexual harassment by Romano when she tries to clear her mother's name. Tracy is framed by Romano and lands her into the jail.

## **b. Women's Role**

There is stereotype that women are always associated with domestic role. Here Tracy has double role

"I'm so sorry, Charles. I'm....pregnant." There was an unbearably long silence, and as Tracy was about to break it, Charles said, "We'll get married, of course." (Sheldon. 1985:11).

Domestic role when she pregnant and planning a wedding so she can become wife and mother.

... She was in charge of the cable-transfer department. Until recently, the transfer of money from one bank to another and from one country to another to be filled out and dependent on national and international postal services (Sheldon, 1985:8).

The public role is when she works as a cable transfer in a bank.

## **c. Women's Right**

We can see women rights in some occasion, for example to get right in getting healthy.

He was going to examine all of them with the same unsterilized speculum, and she would be the last one on whom he used it. She could feel an anger boiling up inside her. He could examine them separately, instead of deliberately stripping away their dignity. And they were letting him get away with it. *If they all protested* – ut was her turn (Sheldon, 1985: 42).

Tracy lost her right for gets healthy when she comes into physical examination, the doctor does not sterilize the speculum, when she ask about the condition, she gets the contrary, she become the last woman that has been checking in the line.

## **d. Women's Participation**

Tracy try to gets her old job after she gets free but she failed although she was the best employee.

Miss Whitney . “ it was no longer Tracy. “ I’m sorry, but what you asking is quite out of the question. I’m sure you can understand that our customers would not wish to deal with someone who served time in the penitentiary for armed robbery and attempted murder. That would hardly fit in with our high ethical image. I think it unlikely that given your background, *any* bank would hire you. I would suggest that you try to find employment more suitable to your circumstances. I hope you understand there is nothing personal in this (Sheldon, 1985: 147-148).

Desperate to find a job, she met Conrad Morgan who offers to get some fast money as jewel stealing and Tracy took it.

#### **e. Woman’s Rebellion**

Woman rebellion is an act that does by woman to against the man dominations. Women have the same rights with man to defeat social structure in our society and inequality gender problem, one of them was legitimated by the religion belief that gender was biased. There many factors that affect the rebellion depend on what kind of rebellion happen. In Sidney Sheldon’s *If Tomorrow Comes*, the researcher finds some aspects that could occur a rebellion that do by the major character, Tracy Whitney. Some of the aspects are:

- a. Her mother’s suicide is the basic force for Tracy Whitney, to struggle justice for her mother. She wants giving a proof that will tell everyone if her mother is not guilty. Finding some proofs to tell why Doris Whitney, Tracy’s mother, got into suicide, Tracy Whitney finds that a gang of men framed her mother. Looking for it, she came into the leader of the gang, Anthony Orsatti, but it is the contrary, he accuses Tracy trying to steal his painting and murder him. Anthony Orsatti barks up the wrong tree as the cover of his evil act.

- b. The main character received unfair judgment, the prosecutor was bribe by the mafia gang and no one dares to defend her. Tracy Whitney is accused being guilty as the case of trying to murder Anthony Orsatti and steal his painting. She sends into 15 years of incarceration in Southern Louisiana Penitentiary for Women.
- c. Tracy Whitney is trying to reach Charles Stanhope, her fiancé, to get assistance. Tracy tries explaining the case, but Charles refuses to help her. He does not want to know about it anymore, even with Tracy's baby, who also his baby.
- d. Tracy Whitney faces a hard life in penitentiary. She gets unfair treatment while in prison, she gets violence and sexual harassment that makes her loses her baby. There are so many bullying actions in the jail. And, Tracy knows that she has to be strong enough to defeat it.
- e. The main character received unfairly things by the society, the society reject her just because she is an ex-prisoner, she difficult to get a job and her normal life in society. It urges her gaining her rights again to get her life back.

In this case, show about woman's rebellion that change and gives an impact to the main character like injustice treatment, so she can undergo the oppression condition in her life.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The analysis of the major character in *If Tomorrow Comes* (1985) by Sidney Sheldon show that women can does rebellion in their life novel. Sidney Sheldon apparently shows that woman can undergo the oppression condition in her life. This research has some conclusions. Firstly, based on the structural

elements of the novel, *If Tomorrow Comes* almost perfectly made. Its structural elements have relation to each other so it cannot be separated from one another to build the story. The main character, Tracy has important role throughout the story. As women, she does not have bigger opportunity as men; she just wants to married her fiancé, life happily with their baby. But her dreams failed when her mother suicide and she try to find justice, she become suffering because man dominance.

Second, based the feminism analysis, Tracy Whitney is the major character in *If Tomorrow Comes* that represents the object of the story who experiences rebellion that reflection the feminism. How does a woman's insurgency undergo the oppression condition of her life? Sheldon shows that women can defeat and struggle in their own effort despite of her biological weaknesses, to reach manner dealings in the society. Tracy experiences it because of her searching in gaining a right for justice; to clear her mother's name leads her to penitentiary. She rebels her life condition, a gang of men is in framed her as a painting thief and attempted a murder, and the society rejected her just because she is an ex-prisoner. From the condition, her role, position, participation, and right is being observed. It shows that women has double role; domestic and public role. The women's position was underestimated by men and the main character break the rules to gets a better position. The main character decided to do activities that mostly doing by men, she becomes jewel swindler, and it shows that women position can be change if they struggle for it. The women's right also reflected in the main character, she lost her right in getting healthy when she entered the jail. The women's participation reflected when Tracy makes decision to be jewel swindler; it shows that women free to make her own decision. main character does

rebellion to revenge for destroy the men authority and for struggle in searching for better life, and the result from her rebellion is she gets a new life although being criminals.



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